The double life of a slippery axolotl

**Explicit instruction of comprehension strategies**

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| **Strategy: QUESTIONING Teaching Idea: Wonderings** |

**Step 1: Select a text**

Texts can range from easy to challenging. The criteria for text selection should focus on text usefulness for teaching a particular strategy or set of strategies, student interests and connections to literacy themes. If the text is challenging

use ‘read-aloud’ when modelling.

***The text chosen is challenging The double life of a slippery axolotl from the 2008 Year 7 NAPLAN reading magazine*.**

**Step 2: Explain the strategy**

Focus on the two questions:

*What is it?*

*Why is it helpful/necessary for comprehension?*

Provide examples to assist this explanation and wherever possible make connections to students’ background knowledge and prior learning.

***What is it? Wonderings is the process of the students writing questions that they may have about the text prior to reading. They use predicting strategies in order to write sensible questions.***

***Why is it helpful/necessary for comprehension? Wonderings enables the student to read with a purpose in mind – they are trying to focus on locating the answer to their question. Asking questions and locating answers will help them to comprehend the text.***

**Step 3: Model the strategy**

Read a section of the text aloud and use a Think Aloud and a visual (symbol, chart, etc) to share ideas with students.

NB: Think Aloud involves orally explaining precisely what is triggering thoughts and how it is affecting understanding.

Explain thinking so that students have a clear idea of the cognitively active process readers experience. If a strategy requires a written or sketched response, model that during this step.

***Wonderings***

***Teacher script: Today we are going to learn the comprehension strategy of QUESTIONING. We are going to do this using the idea of WONDERINGS. This is where you write questions on a post it note (or in your work books) about what you would like to know about the topic from the text before we start to read. What can you use from the text to help you write a question? (title, sub-title, image etc.)***

***My first wondering is: Why does it say in the title that an axolotl has a double life? Why is it slippery? Let’s write these questions in our books (or on post notes).***

***As well as writing ‘Wondering’ questions before you start reading, you could also write these as you read.***

***After the text is read, read the questions and give the answers.***

**Step 4: Guided support**

Read the next section of the text aloud and ask students to work with a partner to apply the new strategy. Discuss the response from paired students and read aloud another section of the text.

***Now let’s think of a ‘Wondering’ question together and write it in your books (or on post notes).***

***Let’s listen for the answer together and write it down (or say the answer).***

* ***Provide as many times to guide the students as necessary for the students to become independent.***

**Step 5: Independent practice**

Monitor as students work independently within the whole group. Either continue reading sections of the text with reduced teacher support or invite students to read independent texts on their own. Regardless, students

independently use the strategy. Differentiate instruction by providing scaffolding for those students who need more support (through further modelling or guided support), and by releasing the task to those students who are ready to use it. The goal is to ensure that students know the strategy and the process for using it. Ultimately students develop a range of strategies that they can use as needed when they are reading on their own.

***Now it’s time for you to try the strategy of questioning on your own using the idea of ‘Wonderings’.***

***Let’s go through the steps of the task before you begin.***

* ***Depending on the skills of the students, the independent practice may be completed in pairs or small groups of 3 or 4.***

**Step 6: Reflect**

Ask students to reflect on how using the strategy helped them to understand the text. Invite them to share their reflections in small groups or with the whole class. Discuss how they can use the strategy when they are reading on

their own.